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HAÏTI AND SPAIN :

A MEMORIAL,

BY RICHARD HILL,

DEDICATED TO

THE HONORABLE W. H. SEWARD,

Secretary of State at Washington.

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HAÏTI' AND SPAIN.

We are informed that Spain has sent a formal claim to the Government of Haïti, for the territories between the Massacre, and the Neyba, the two rivers of the North and South coasts of ancient Hispaniola to the East, and the mountain limits stretching from Valliere to the heights of Bahoruco to the West,—in a word they have claimed the restitution of the plains in the centre of the island. When we heard of the popular act, as it was called by which Spain regained Santo Domingo, and its territories, we were informed that England and France had acquiesced, because the people had spontaneously recalled the Spaniard, and surrendered the country to the dominion of Spain. Now, we hear, that for that central territory, held by the Republic of Haïti, and inhabited by the Haïtian, and not yet engulfed in Santana's vortex of treachery, they make a claim, and submit the rightfulness of that claim to the arbitration of France and England.

France and England are said to have acquiesced in the surrender made to Spain of so much of Hispaniola, as Spain has got possession of, because the people willed it. Here is a territory in which there is no possession in Spain, and where the popular will is opposed to any surrender to Spain;—a territory that passed away from Spain by a treaty as far back as 1795, the treaty of Bâle, and held by the people of Haïti, under the revolutionary fortune that made Western Haïti a free and independent State. Will England and France become parties to a violation of all principle of recognized acquisition by the faith of treaties, and declare a reversion to Spain by the act of treason which gave her the footing she has now gained in Santo Domingo? We cannot say what may be the issue of the reference, but to understand what ought to be the issue of it, we must go into the history of the Spanish abandonment of her an-

cient colony, and the events which made it a part of the Republic of Haiti.

When the French Revolution had alike unsettled every thing in the Mother Country, and in the colonies, and conflicts ensued in St. Domingo for constitutional liberty, in which exclusive interests struggled to maintain themselves amid disorder,—the controversy whether slaves were to continue bondmen, and proscribed freemen, to submit to be debarred the rights of freedom,—was brought to a close by the insurrectionary movements of the colony, fomented by the Spanish government of Hispaniola. In November 1791, *Jean François* and *Biassou*, had addressed their letter to the General Assembly at the Cape, asking the recognition of the insurrectionary slaves of the North as freemen. The demand was refused. When monarchy in France was abolished in the following year, the insurgents announced themselves the partizans of monarchy against the Republican spirit of the colony. England, persuaded to send her army to aid this avowal of Royalism against Republicanism, was committed to the maintenance of a disastrous war on the soil of St. Domingo. The spirit in which Spain entered upon this scheme for partitioning the French colony, under the pretext of abetting the Royalist cause, will be best understood by a reference to the atrocity perpetrated at Fort Dauphin, by Jean François, whom they especially patronized as a leader of the "*Gens du Roi*" in the North. The Spanish priest Vasquez, in his sacerdotal robes, had blessed, on the glacis of the fortifications, the united troops of insurgent Blacks and Spaniards. Being thus sacredly dedicated to their purposes, they marched through the streets of the town in silence, and poignarded the French inhabitants. Nothing was spared, men, women, children, old and young all perished, but fourteen persons, who saved themselves by dressing in Spanish uniforms.*

France, to weaken England, as her enemy, on the soil of St.

* *Memoires de la Revolution de Saint Domingue*, par le Lieut., Gen. Baron Pamphile de La Croix. Tom. I, chap. viii, A.D. 1794—pages 285, 288, 290—1, 2.

Domingo, and to deprive her of the co-operation of Spain in her meditated conquest of the ancient colony, forced Spain into that treaty of peace in July 1795, known as the Treaty of Bâle, by which Spain ceded to France the colony of Hispaniola. The treaty of Bâle is rendered memorable as the antagonism of Monarchy against the Republican spirit of the time, by the exchange, on the part of France, of the Bourbon princess, sister of Louis the 17th then a prisoner in the Temple with her unfortunate brother for the Republican deputies Semonville and Maret, who had been seized in violation of international Law, in a neutral territory by an Austrian corps. England, unaided by Spain in her struggles in St Domingo, carried on a disastrous warfare against the emancipated negroes. France had now embodied them for the defence of liberty against a foreign slave-master. In that contest Toussaint Louverture made his memorable name, receiving with the capitulation of the English at St. Nicholas Mole, their engagement to evacuate the French territories. Haiti, now in 1798, became a single and undivided colony, uniting Santo Domingo with Cape François, Port-au-Prince, and Aux Cayes, as four departments.

The treaty of Spain with France in 1795, put an end to the partizanship of the Gens du Roi, with the English invading army. On the surrender of the Spanish part of the island to France, Jean François and his principal officers retired to Europe to enjoy the favour of the court of Madrid. Jean François died, only comparatively lately, a pensioner in Spain.*

It is true that the Spaniards of Hispaniola resisted the transfer of the colony to France. The inhabitants claimed the right in the midst of the revolutionary spirit of the time to decide their own destiny. Six years passed from the Treaty of Bâle, when Hispaniola ceased to be a part of the dominions of

* 1795. La paix entre la France et L'Espagne mit fin aux bandes de Jean François; ce chef s'embarqua, avec ses principaux officiers, pour aller jouir, dans la péninsule, des faveurs de la cour de Madrid. Il s'est retiré à Ceuta, avec le titre, les décorations et les emolumens de Capitain-General. Pamp. de la Croix. Hist. de St. Dom. Tom 1. chap. viii, page 304.

Spain, to 1801, before the French Government could assume sovereignty in Santo Domingo. The inhabitants had committed themselves in concert with England, to resist Republicanism against monarchy. "Destiny" says Pamphile de la Croix, the historian of Revolutionary St Domingo, "has often a greater share in events than the calculations made to bring them about." Toussaint Louverture and Rigaud had wasted themselves and the blood and resources of the Ancient French colony, in contests for ascendancy. As soon as a pause had occurred in their fratricidal warfare, Toussaint proceeded to take possession of the Spanish colony. The territory acquired by France had rested from '95 to 1801, neither French nor Spanish, but Hispaniolan, and self-governed,—in consequence of the eventual uncertainty of the colony, during the internecine conflicts of Northern and Southern Haïti. The citizen General-in-Chief Toussaint, was now called upon in an express arrêté, "to concert means with the municipality of the Cape, in virtue of the treaty of Bâle, and of instructions from the National Government of France for taking immediate possession of the part ci-divant Spanish." The demand to surrender the colony was answered not by any representative of Spain, but by the Cabildo of Santo Domingo, the Marquis de Harmona, the Spanish Governor, having relinquished his post and abandoned the colony years before. The people, maintaining their own independence for a space of six years against the treaty, by which the sovereign State had surrendered the colony to revolution,—were the possessors of authority. The arrêté for this enterprise was no sooner issued, and an officer sent to Santo Domingo, than the Hispaniolans menaced resistance. The arrêté was officially withdrawn by the French national agent Roume, who issued it. Don Joachim Garcia, acting as President of the Hispaniolan Territory, after some preliminary explanation, received Toussaint Louverture in the name of the French Republic, and surrendered to him the colony, asking forgetfulness of that past, in which Hispaniola for six years had assumed self-government, abandoned by one master, and under the delayed possession of another. Toussaint Louverture as the Republican General-in-Chief, and elected Governor for life, was

received at the Communal House, by the Cabildo. According to Spanish usage, he was required in the name of the most Holy Trinity, to take the oath to govern with wisdom the City, and the Island he came to take possession of, and was thus, formally invested with supreme authority.*

The peace of Amiens closed the war between England and France. Toussaint Louverture was at the city of Santo Domingo (February 1802) when the ill-fated expedition under Napoleon Bonaparte's brother-in-law, LeClerc, was sent to dispossess him of his authority and to reduce the emancipated negroes to slavery again. The issue of that contest, though calamitous to Toussaint Louverture, sealed the liberty of the negroes, and was fatal to French domination in Haïti. "At this disastrous epoch," says Guillermin, the historian who relates the events of Santo Domingo from 1801 to 1809, when the French were finally expelled from the Spanish territory, and it was again given up to self-government,—“at this disastrous epoch commenced to develop the germ of that discontent occasioned by the violent spirit of resistance assumed by the inhabitants ever since the cession of Eastern Haïti to France.” In this resistance they combatted for the right of independence. War had been resumed between France and England (1808). Western Haïti had been evacuated by France—General Ferrand now commanding the remnant of the French army, held possession of the city of Santo Domingo from 1804, when Dessalines invested it, till 1809, when it surrendered to the British troops sent from Jamaica under General Carmichael. Ferrand had fought with the Creole Hispaniolans the fatal battle of Palo-hincado, in which he had suffered defeat, and unable to endure calamity, he had destroyed himself, when retreating, and in sight of the walls of Santo Domingo.

The colony now possessed by the English, was delivered up to the inhabitants, represented by their Creole Chieftian Don Juan Sanchez. The English soldiers who entered the city, Guillermin contrasts, in a very graphic way, with the French

* Pamp. de la Croix, &c. Tome II, ch. xi, pages 2, 3.

garrison—the plentitude of health and good living in the one, and the famished state of those, whom the beleaguering Hispaniolans had nearly starved to death.* The English troops were addressed by General Carmichael, on receiving the keys of the city, in the following speech :—

“ Soldiers ! God, who disposes, at His will, the fate of Empires and of Armies, has placed in your hands the destiny of this country. You do not owe to your bravery, the possession of this place, for, neither time nor opportunity has been afforded you to display courage before the enemy ; he surrenders only under the weight of calamities incident to war, against which valour can effect nothing ;—but honour the military virtues of these brave troops ; imitate them and you will become like them worthy of the administration of your fellow men.”†

The, English demanding of the Spanish inhabitants, now left in possession of their ancient colony, pledges to indemnify

* *Precis historique des derniers evenemens de la partie de l'est de Saint Domingue*, par M. Gilbert Guillermin. Chef d'escadron—Paris 1811.

The sufferings of the starved garrison may be estimated at the time Santo Domingo surrendered to the armament from Jamaica, from the following table “ du prix de comestibles.”

Farine du froment la livre, 8 fr. 25 cents. (1 gourde, 4 reaux.)

Pain de trente onces, 38 fr. (6 gourdes.)

Manioc en racines, le sac ou le demi baril 330 fr. (60 gourdes.)

Sucre, la livre, 16 fr. 50 c. (3 gourdes.)

Café, *idem* 3 fr., 44 c., (5 reaux.)

Viande de bœuf et de cochon fraîche la livre, 11 fr., (2 g.)

Idem de bourrique la livre, 4 fr., 13 c., (6 reaux.)

Idem de cheval, *idem* 5 fr., 50 c., (1 gourde.)

Idem de chien, *idem*, 2 fr., 55 c., (4 reaux.) Le rat ne se vendient pas, mais on les mangent, quand on avait le bonheur d'en prendre.

† “ Soldats, Le Dieu qui dispose à son gré du sort des empires, et des armées, a remis entre vos mains la destinée de ce pays : vous ne devez point à votre courage la possession de cette place, puisque vous n'avez eu ni le temps ni l'occasion de le deployer contre un ennemi qui ne succombe que sous le poids des calamités qu'entraîne la guerre, et contre lesquelles la valeur ne peut rien, mais honorez les vertus militaires de ces braves troupes ; imitez—les, et vous deviendrez comme elles, dignes de l'admiration des hommes.”

Precis historique, &c., par M G. Guillermin, &c., page 349.

them for the costs incurred by them in their interposition, took as surety the bells of the city at their metallic valuation of 6000 dollars, and left Don Juan Sanchez, a native of Hispaniola, to govern them. The character of Sanchez is drawn with great particularity by Guillermin. We translate it in full, because it shows how completely the ancient Spanish colony was committed to self-reliance and independence under a remarkable native and an energetic leader, who enjoyed popular confidence :—

“ Don Juan Sanchez bore with unquietness the haughty tone of the English towards him. He could not endure that the auxiliary troop should reap the fruit of the labours of his army, without partaking with them the dangers of eight months' battling. But as the evil was without remedy, and the circumstances so pressing, an absolute denegation of his own pretensions was the only way of preventing a schism, that must have been to his disadvantage. He dissembled his displeasure, and affected on all occasions a marked deference to his powerful allies. Few men possessed in a higher degree than the Spanish chieftain, dissimulation, and the talent of knowing how to use it.” Guillermin then goes more specially into Sanchez's traits of character :—His gentle demeanour, his air of simplicity and modesty—all, however, covering pride and finesse. Extremely secret and reserved, he admitted few persons to his confidence, and only permitted those who sought to know him to see so much of him, as would serve his own interest in disclosing. He had schemes, and knew how to flatter the passions of those he stood in need of for his purposes. He had never had his valour tested, but he possessed a firmness of soul that stood in the stead of courage, and raised him to the quality of a soldier.* He struck for the chieftainship, and he obtained it. Sanchez, the tranquil holder of the country, after the departure of the English, dreamt of nothing but the means to render firm his authority. It was divided with chiefs, bold and proud of their services. Bold by the license of the camp, they were upheld by

* *Precis historique des derniers evenemens de Saint Domingue, page 353.*

the unbridled populace, who acknowledged no law, but their own will, and no rules but their own desires. With the reins of government committed to hands that were inactive or unfaithful, there would be nothing but an abyss of disorder for the unfortunate colony.* The Peninsular war rendered England more generous than just in serving Spain at the expense of Haiti. The peace of Paris in 1814, exacted from France a relinquishment of all claim to Hispaniola. *Spain had abandoned it by the Treaty of Bâle, and lost it by the destiny of St. Domingo as a free and independent State.*—She never even by the concession of the treaty of Paris regained what she had lost. The year 1821 again saw Hispaniola a free country, and her old chieftains declaring the East united to the West as the Republic of Haiti. It continued so till the events which brought about the expulsion of Boyer from the Presidency in 1848, when it resisted the pretensions of those who have fomented so many disorders in Haiti, and especially of those who subverted the constitution of the Republic, and substituted in its place a lawless despotism. Santana, who had distinguished himself in resistance to Soulouque, on being raised to the Presidency—by bribery and treason—has brought in the troops of the Queen of Spain, and, under the pretext of a popular movement, has given, *all that he held in opposition to the re-instated Republic of Haiti since the fall of Soulouque, not including the central plains, up to Spain*—clearing out by military murders,—since they are executions without judicial trials—the descendants of the Sanchezs, the Garcias and the Remirezs,—the brave men who had achieved all that has been done for liberty and independence,—the result of Spain's surrender of her colony by the Treaty of Bâle.

We would describe the tract of country that is to be made the subject of reference to France and England. It is a vast Llanura within a circuit of mountains, touching the sea only at one corner, the embouchure of the Neyba; the other coast being the iron-bound Bahoruco. It is traversed by several

* *Precis historique, &c.*, page 356-7.

rivers. The Neyba bounds it to the East; the Artibonite and the Rio á Cañas intersect it from East to West; large tributary streams descend to these great intersecting rivers from the North and from the South—the embouchure being to the West, within the gulf waters of the Bight of Leogan, through the great plain of Mirebalais,—waters and territories of the ancient French colony,—the Republic of Haiti. The great Salt Lake of Henriquillo stretches forty miles at the foot of a broad plateau of mountains constituting the Bahoruco district, of which little is known, but that it is a forest abounding in the finest Mahogany.

That we may not be accused of giving to this great central plain an unduly coloured character, we shall quote the description of it by the Historian Bryan Edwards—"The greatest part remains as nature originally created it;—covered with wood of immense growth and luxuriant foliage with very little under-wood. The mahogany and the cedar,—the fustic and a thousand others here flourish and die unmolested. In places are vast groves of the Latanier, or thatch palm, the sight of which always gives pleasure to the beholder, not more from the singular conformation and beauty of the tree itself than from the circumstance, that it indicates with unerring certainty a rich and deep soil underneath."*

This though said of Hispaniola generally is the aspect of the central part especially. When the plain is first surveyed from some one of the mountain passes, by which it is entered, the course of the Artibonite—its great arterial stream—is hid by one dense mass of the Areca palm. The mahogany abounds on the low river grounds, but growing in too luxuriant a soil, the wood is not so variegated as the large single trees, or trees that stand in clumps in the champaign country, blended with the tropical pine-tree,—the *pinus occidentalis*—a fir very much resembling the Scotch fir. These noble mahogany trees, the largest of vegetable growths, yield the finest timbers of commerce, a single tree realizing when it reaches Europe or Ame-

* Historical Survey of St. Domingo, ch. xiii.

rica £800—being in the log of the depth of five feet. The mahogany-cuts are tracts of land rented by the foreign merchants. They are the great shippers of timber, and their mahogany logs, felled by workmen sent hither and subsidized by them,—find their way to the embarcadier only through the territories of Western Haïti by the single river, the Artibonite. Let that river be closed by surrendering the country now claimed as portions of the old colony, and the timber of the Guayamuco,—the Banica, the Rio á Cañas, the river of Juan de Vera and the Aguesera, and of a thousand ravines of the Cahos mountains,—the mountains that wall the plain here from South to North, must stand untouched, or as Bryan Edwards described it, when he wrote, they must “flourish and die unmolested.” The district referred to in these details is Las Cahobas, a name signifying the mahoganies,—Cahoba being the Indian word for mahogany.

The plain is entered from the West through a narrow ravine in the mountain at the Roche de Neybouc, scarce more than wide enough for two horsemen to pass abreast. Through this opening, and by some narrow mountain roads, higher up in the great plains of St. Miguel and St. Raphael, the multitudinous cattle of the Llanos found their way to the plantation markets in the time of the French colony. “The French settlers wanted oxen for their markets and horses for their mills, and these their neighbours were able to supply,—the Spaniards receiving through the French the manufactures of Europe in exchange for cattle.”* This is the trade of the central region still, the only accommodation for commodities here being through the merchants of Port-au-Prince, Gonaives and Cape Haitien, by the passes we have mentioned in the mountains.

Christophe erected the fortress of the Ferrier, an impregnable citadel, with 200 pieces of brass cannon, some of the very largest caliber, a citadel impregnable till the mutilations by the

* Historical Survey of St. Domingo, ch. xii.—The only pass more southward is the transit by water carriage through the lakes. Spain has but one inlet along her frontier, by Azua.

Earthquake of 1842, to maintain his hold of Central Hispaniola. The Spaniard could never have dared to look for a repossession of the great plains of St. Raphael and St. Miguel that lay beneath it, in Christophe's time. In these plains he fed and bred the splendid horses of the Royal stables, and here the General Guerrier was attending his cattle-farm, when called to assume the Presidency and to serve his country, leaving a name bright for its integrity, and a character distinguished for its sensibility and humanity—negro as he was.*

The Bahoruco, with its valuable mahogany, the most valuable of the present exports, is a tract never traversed by a Spanish foot since the pacification of the fugitive Indians, under the Cacique Henry, in the time of Charles the Fifth, A.D. 1532. It now sends its cargoes for shipment to the port of Jacmel. All this range of country must become a wilderness and valueless to commerce, if the claim of Spain is assented to, and this tract of country wrested from the Republic of Haiti. Will Spain indemnify the European merchants for their losses?—will she compensate the Haitien proprietors for the cattle farms, they must yield up, and the mahogany cuts, they must relinquish? All these are matters for settlement.

The commerce of Haïti employs annually between five hundred and six hundred vessels giving a total of 70,000 tons distributed among the following nations:—

United States.....	Ships 250,	Tonnage 30,000
England.....	" 90,	" 12,000
France.....	" 70,	" 12,000
German, Danish, Swedish } and Russian.....	" 50,	" 8,000
Holland, Belgium, Italy, } Central America.....	" 50,	" 7,000

—The tonnage figures are considered 25 per cent deficient in

* The great traverse from the Northern shores of the French into the Spanish colony, was by the vale of Dondon, through a narrow valley into St. Raphael, called LaPorte, it can be passed in wheeled vehicles.

measurement, the Haïtian mode of measurement being reckoned as short of the true quantity always.

The annual exports of the principal staples are thus estimated :—

Coffee.....	50,000,000 lbs.	Haïtian.	
Logwood	50,000,000	"	"
Cotton.....	1,000,000	"	" just commenced.
Cacao.....	1,200,000	"	"
Mahogany.....	2,500,000	"	"

—Hides can only be approximately set down by its 600,000 inhabitants.

These are commercial objects to be affected in the Spanish unsettlement of Trade.

If we have recourse to the formality of Treaties for a solution of the differences that stand referred to France and England, between Spain and Haïti, the Haïtian has to complain of compacts violated. France guaranteed Haiti as a free integral State against all disputants, and Spain gave in her adhesion to the independence the Hispaniolaen exercised. ¶That status of the island was to be a pledge for pecuniary obligations to all countries. Men form associations by common sympathies. A correspondence in condition and circumstances has more power in uniting men than the force of treaties. It has been well said by a great name among the political men of England—Edmund Burke—that “the secret, unseen, but irrefragable bond of habitual intercourse, holds people together, even when their perverse and litigious nature sets them to equivocate, scuffle and fight, about the terms of their written obligations.” Because the Haïtians have had dissensions under the common name of Haïtians, it is no warrant for a foreign intruder to stand between them, and say he interferes, but for one party.

Let Haiti suffer no further dismemberment.

RICHARD HILL

